
A
TENDER SALUTATION

IN
GOSPEL LOVE, &c.



A
TENDER SALUTATION
IN
GOSPEL LOVE,

WRITTEN PRINCIPALLY
FOR THE USE OF HIS RELATIONS,

BY
THOMAS COLLEY. *K*

THE SECOND EDITION.

“No man when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.”---LUKE viii. 16.

L O N D O N :

Printed and sold by JAMES PHILLIPS, George Yard, Lombard Street

M. DCC. XCIV.



ADVERTISEMENT.

Several Friends having expressed a wish that the following Piece, of which the Author printed but a small number, might be more generally circulated, he has consented to a Second Edition for that purpose.

P R E F A C E.

WHEN Cornelius was favoured with a visitation from the holy Angel, whereby he was instructed where to apply for the knowledge of those things by which both he and his household might be saved, we find that he convened his kinsmen and near friends. His good-will not being circumscribed within the narrow bounds of his own family, he wished his friends might also be partakers with him. I may acknowledge that my mind hath many times been turned towards my relations, desirous not to eat my morsel alone, but that I might some way or other hold forth a language to them, similar to that of David, when he said, "Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul; O taste, and see that the Lord is good." But as my relations are much dispersed in various parts of the country, I could see no probability of having them convened in one place; and therefore it appeared to me that committing to writing the following lines, was the best expedient for extending to them a little salutation of love,

and discharging my own duty. But what principally bore weight on my mind, was to endeavour to point out, in plain terms, according to my present ability, the divine principle of light and life manifested in the hearts of mankind, with its blessed effects upon them, as it is believed in and obeyed; as that which is most essential to be known, and its operations experienced. It is not my intention to disgust any, by meddling with disputed points of doctrine; but if they are nappily brought to witness the teachings of Him who declared himself to be the way, the truth, and the life, and stand open to the further illuminations of light, they may come to experience what our Lord said to the Jews, If any man will do the will of my Father, he shall know of the doctrine: and therefore I commend the following lines to thy serious perusal, and thy soul to the grace of God, and remain thy affectionate kinsman,

T. C.

TENDER SALUTATION

IN

GOSPEL LOVE, &c.

IN a degree of that good-will which wishes the happiness of all mankind, I have felt my mind disposed to offer a salutation in gospel love to you, who are my kindred after the flesh; desiring that grace, mercy, and peace may abound amongst you whilst in this earthly pilgrimage, and state of probation; and that you may finally witness an everlasting salvation.

Since it pleased the Almighty to open mine eyes to see into my own state, and into the excellency of that salvation which he hath prepared before the face of all people, my mind hath often been enlarged in love

towards the human race in general, and more particularly of late to my relations; with desires that the God of all grace would be mercifully pleased so effectually to visit their souls with his day-spring from on high, as to turn their feet into the way of peace, and to bring their minds unto a settlement on that foundation which standeth sure; even Christ Jesus manifested in the hearts of his people; which was, and remains to be, the hope of the saints glory; and which would be a defence against temptations, and a support in times of tribulation and affliction.

The soul of man, designed, by the Author of its existence, for a participation of celestial felicity, can never attain to substantial satisfaction in the possession of the things of this world, without witnessing something of that divine good, which proceedeth from above, from the Father of lights: for though people may seek satisfaction in the gratifications of sense, in pleasures, or in amusements, which are presented to their view; yet in the seeming enjoyment they frequently witness disappointment, and the reflection thereon is bitterness. All real happiness centereth in God, and under the influence of his fear. It is the work of the adversary of man's happiness, in order to forward his destruction and eternal misery, to draw out his attention and desires
after

after those things which are inconsistent with the cross of Christ ; making forbidden things appear desirable, and representing them as of small moment ; and when he hath once gained his point, the next temptation comes with greater strength. It is in vain for men to propose limits, or that they will go so far and no further ; for though in the early part of life, or beginning of the warfare, temptations were weak, and, by turning the attention of the mind to the grace of God, might easily have been overcome ; yet, by going from the secret checks of the holy Spirit, which occasioned a struggle against sin, and by joining in with the temptation, their propensities, by habit, gain such strength, as they are neither able to satisfy nor restrain. Hence it is that we sometimes hear men say, when overcome by sin, or reproved for it, We know these things are wrong, but we cannot help it ; and this is lamentably the case with mankind in too general a way, until they come to experience redemption and salvation, through the grace and good Spirit of Christ.

Now, what I earnestly desire for you is, that ye may happily be partakers of this salvation : for, though in the times of ignorance, mankind have departed from God, their understandings have become darkened, and their

affections alienated from him, wandering as in a maze of uncertainties, concerning God, and heaven, and happiness; yet there is a time afforded unto them wherein they may be saved: in which time the Lord doth mercifully visit and strive with them, by his grace and good spirit, in order to their reconciliation, and for bringing them into a state of obedience unto the gospel. For the great work of salvation, which all ought to be engaged in, is not within their own power, as men, to accomplish. Nothing can deliver a soul from sin, but the grace and Spirit of Christ. The apostle Peter said, "Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage;" and therefore it must be something superior to himself that can make him free. The apostle Paul, describing a state sensible of the corruptions and evil propensities of fallen nature, thus expresseth himself, "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not; for the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." Again, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin;" and afterwards he exclaims, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver

live me from the body of this death." He presently gives the answer himself, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" Rom. chap. 7. and proceeds, in the fore part of the 8th chap. to describe how; "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The work of our redemption, in our individual capacities, is an inward work, wherein the heart must be engaged: for it is the heart in which the opposite powers of sin and grace strive, and there being two seeds within us contending for the mastery, that to which we yield obedience, will have the government in us: as it is written, "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Rom. vi. 16.

It will not be sufficient to bear the name of Christians, even though we were to conform to all the rites of any visible church; unless we experience the regenerating power of the Spirit so to operate in us, as to bruise the head of the serpent, which is sin, and to reduce the heart into a state of obedience. The means whereby this change is accomplished is variously denominated in the Scriptures of Truth, according to its different operations on the minds of men. It is called

" The true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," John i. 9. It is called an " Engrafted word, which is able to save the soul," James i. 21. something that is in us, but not of us. It is called " The word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever;" of which the primitive churches, in the first breaking forth of the gospel day, were born again, 1 Peter i. 23. It is called " The word of faith, nigh in the heart," Rom. x. 8; and " Christ within, the hope of glory," Col. i. 27.; and by many more names, to the same import, delivered by the different holy penmen, as they were moved by the holy Spirit; but whatever name it is called by, it does not change its nature. It remaineth one holy, living, powerful principle, which God hath placed in the hearts of men universally; in order that no part of his rational creation should be deprived of the means of salvation; for, wherever they are situated, or however they are circumstanced, they are all favoured with this unspeakable gift. The rich and the great are not independent on its assistance, neither are the poor and abject placed below its gracious influence. Let it not seem strange, that I affirm this truth so strongly and plainly; it is but a concurring testimony with that

that of the righteous in all ages ; and your own church* not only admits it, but apparently professeth to have faith therein ; when in the Common Prayer it hath these expressions, ‘ Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, we beseech thee, by the inspiration of thy holy Spirit, that so we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name.’ Neither do I believe that the holy Spirit, thus dispensed upon the children of men, is a dormant inactive thing, or that we can have no knowledge or perception of it. If this had been the case, how were men to discern betwixt flesh and spirit ? And if they could not distinguish, they must be altogether at a loss, or at uncertainties, which of them to follow, notwithstanding the unspeakable importance of a right judgment, and a right practice, in this matter ; for the apostle testified, to the believers formerly, in these searching terms, “ If ye live after the flesh ye shall die ; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live : for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” This text alone I think is sufficient to shew not only the possibility, but necessity, of attaining to the evidence of the holy Spirit.

* Many of the writer’s relations are of the Established Church.

When

When Paul was writing his epistle to Titus, he had these words, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." The manifestation of the Spirit, that is given to every man to profit withal, is not only self-evident, but placeth them in a capacity of improving thereby, in the most important concern of their lives, the salvation of the soul; and the neglecting of it, or rebelling against it, will tend greatly to aggravate their condemnation at last. This gift, or Spirit of God, which is the privilege of the gospel dispensation, for the redeeming, sanctifying, and justifying of mankind, is so adapted to their various states, that it is able to meet, detect, and counteract, all the evil propensities of fallen nature, and to lift up a standard against all the temptations of the wicked one. There are no recesses of the heart so dark, as that its light doth not penetrate them; no root of the corrupt tree so deep, as that the axe of the power of God is not laid to it; so that a mind which is rightly directed to its proper object, the Spirit of Christ in the heart, will find therein all-sufficient strength, as there is a resigning of the soul thereto, and exercising a reverent trust
and

and confidence therein. For the gift is in itself pure, and undefiled, and doth not suffer sin in any with approbation; but its tendency is, by righteous judgments, to reduce the strength of sin, and purge the conscience from every defilement. But from the soul that is subject to sin, he withdraws himself; for he dwelleth not in an unclean temple, nor in the body that is subject to sin; yet he follows such with his reproofs, and secret calls, during the time that his gracious visitations are extended: as it is written, "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets; she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates; in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, &c.— Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you," Prov. i. 20, &c.

God, in great mercy, hath not only provided means for the recovery of men out of the fall, which are adequate to the great end proposed; but, in much long-suffering, waiteth upon them, stretching forth his arm, as it were, all the day long; not willing that any should perish, but that all should be brought to true repentance, and salvation. Thus he may say, as he did unto the men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, concerning his vineyard,

vineyard, "What could be done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" It must be an awful situation for any poor mind to be in, near the close of time, when nature fails, and all visible objects yield no relief, to have a similar language sounded in the soul to that which Christ uttered over Jerusalem. When he beheld her state, and considered the misery that was coming upon her, he wept over her with this lamentation, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." — "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as an hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." It is not the ordinary way of God's workings, to force men into felicity, nor save them without their knowledge and consent; but that they may be exercised, under the influence and assistance of his grace, in working out their own salvation with fear and trembling; knowing that it is he that worketh in them, both to will and to do, both to incline their hearts to that which is right, and furnish with ability to perform it.

Many are the great and precious promises contained in the holy scriptures, and the declarations of the kindness and good-will of the Almighty towards the children of men: such

such as this, " I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you ; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you," &c. but he plainly declared, " I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." Surely nothing is more worthy of our pursuit ; especially seeing that our labour will not be in vain ; for the language of the lip of truth was, " Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you ;" but if we do not seek, we have but little reason to expect to find ; or if we do not knock, that the door will be opened unto us. And yet there may be an asking, and not receiving ; and a seeking, and not finding ; when the mind is not directed to him that is the door, the way, the truth, and the life ; for many there are who may be seeking, and asking, in a formal and customary way ; repeating prayers made ready to their hands, and attending on what they call the ordinances of God ; whilst their hearts and minds, are continually ranging amongst created objects, and strangers to that awful covering of the Lord's Spirit which is the soul's proper centre, where they can seek and ask aright. It would be well for such to recollect, and consider, the solemn declaration

claration of the Almighty unto a people formerly : " This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me ; but in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." In order then to seek aright, and that our labours may be crowned with success, let us be concerned to seek the Lord, not only *whilst* he may be found, but *where* he may be found ; bearing in mind what the apostle said, " That which may be known of God is manifest in them," that is in man, Rom. i. 19. When the pharisees demanded of Christ when the kingdom of God should come, he answered, " The kingdom of God cometh not with observation ; neither shall they say, Lo here, or Lo there, for the kingdom of God is within you." " God," saith the apostle, " who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face," or appearance " of Jesus Christ." He hath brought his salvation near, and his righteousness to be revealed, so that none need to say, " Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring Christ down from above ? or who shall descend into the deep, to bring Christ from the dead ?" for " the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart ;

heart; that is the word of faith which we preach," said the apostle, Rom. x. 8.

This word of faith, or engrafted word, as a divine principle that God hath placed in the heart of man, is the fountain, and fresh spring, of all his spiritual light and ability; and man profiteth by it, as his attention is turned unto it, and obedience yielded to its manifestations. A great deal depends on a proper frame of mind in entering upon, and safe travelling in, this great concern; and that which I have found, by many years experience, to contribute much towards the attaining of this desirable end, is settling down, in my mind, into a state of awful silence. In this state it is, that divine intelligence is communicated, and understood; and this is correspondent with the new covenant dispensation, in which the Lord declared that he would write his law in their hearts, and put it in their minds. I think it must appear very evident, that, to understand that spiritual law, a state of silence, or abstraction of mind, is not only profitable but necessary; nor is it a practice peculiar to me, or to the society with whom I am united in religious fellowship, but there are many clear testimonies in holy writ to the same practice; as when the Almighty commanded by his prophet, "Be still, and know that I am God;"
again,

again, "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord; for he is raised up out of his holy habitation." Again, "Keep silence before me, O Islands, and let the people renew their strength. Let them draw near, then let them speak." When a mind is gathered into a state of quietude, under the evidence of that redeeming power which can stop the thoughts, and cast down imaginations, and hath an ear open to hear that sacred language proclaimed in the soul, "The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him;" when an awful solemnity covers the spirit, under which true contrition of heart is experienced, this is a desirable situation. It was a state like this that the spouse in the Canticles described in this animated language, "I sat down under his shadow with delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste; he brought me to the banquetting house, and his banner over me was love." It is in this state of quiet inward attention, that sound instruction is sealed to our understanding, and our minds clothed with spiritual strength; consistent with the testimony of the holy prophet, "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Yea, they will find, by comfortable

able experience, that there is no joy to be compared with the joy of God's salvation, as they come to obtain redemption by the washing of regeneration or renewing of the Holy Ghost; witnessing, from day to day, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; but that his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace; (yea, far surpassing all the satisfaction that can be derived from the perishing things of this world, however promising its prospects may be,) besides a well-grounded hope of immortality and eternal life, which is the attendant support of those who are exercised under the discipline of the cross of Christ.

Although the arriving at these attainments may be through various conflicts, and exercises of mind, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and, these being contrary one to the other, a warfare may be experienced; yet such as make the Lord their refuge, and the God of Israel their habitation, will know a being hid as in his pavilion, and covered as in the hollow of his hand: and should they become the song of the drunkard, and a bye-word amongst their acquaintance, who may count their lives madness, and their end to be without honour; yet all these light afflictions

tions are not worthy to be compared with the joys which are hereafter to be revealed. Indeed it hath ever been the lot of the righteous to have their portion of sufferings, from within or without. The apostles testified that, "through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom." Let the wise choice of one formerly be remembered, who counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; choosing rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward.

For your encouragement it may be truly said, that the Lord is not an hard master, but his yoke is easy and his burden light. Be ye then persuaded to make trial for yourselves. It is a matter wherein we are all deeply interested. Get into a state of retirement, and self-examination. Do not be afraid of it, it will never harm you, and it may be productive of unspeakable advantage. "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still," was the counsel and advice of David, who was a man of large and sound experience; who, no doubt, had found the good effects resulting from it in his own mind, and was disposed to recommend it to the practice of others. Hereby

ay you may come to be favoured with the communication of light and life; and, whereas you may have known a time, when ye were like sheep without a shepherd, so likewise ye may know, by living experience, a returning unto Christ, the shepherd and bishop of your souls; who will sustain those that depend on him, with the bread of life; and refresh their spirits with the new wine of his kingdom.

Having thus far enlarged, in my salutation of love, I shall now draw to a conclusion; and if these broken sentences are favourably received by those to whom they are particularly addressed, I shall be satisfied; but if they should happily prove instrumental in helping one poor soul forward in its way towards Sion, my labour will be amply rewarded. I have nothing in view in exposing these lines, but your present and everlasting well-being; and therefore "I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified;" and that this may be your happy experience is the fervent desire of

your kinsman,

THOMAS COLLEY.

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